

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR INSPECTIONS BEGIN

REF: SEOUL 363

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT PAK BEGAN HIS ANNUAL NEW YEAR INSPECTION OF GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES JANUARY 22-24 WITH KEY VISITS TO ECONOMIC PLANNING BOARD AND MINISTERIES OF FINANCE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND DEFENSE. EXTENSIVE REPORTS IN PRESS AND FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATIONS WITH ROKG OFFICIALS INDICATE PRESIDENTIAL/MINISTRY EXCHANGES CONTAINED STANDARD FARE WITH NO NEW POLICY DEPARTURES. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JANUARY 22 PRESIDENT ISSUED APPEAL TO HIS ECONOMIC CHIEFS DURING VISIT TO EPB FOR CONCENTRATED NATIONAL EFFORT TO RESTORE FOUNDATION OF ECONOMIC STABILITY UPON WHICH ROK SHOULD PURSUE ECONOMIC GROWTH. NOTING THAT ROK'S ECONOMY WAS SHOWING SIGNS OF RECOVERY HE CALLED UPON MINISTRIES TO ADAPT NATION'S
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ECONOMY TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS. ECHOING

MAJOR THEME OF HIS NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE PRESIDENT REITERATED HIS RESOLVE TO CLEAN UP GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, CALLING THE ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE "A TASK NO LESS IMPORTANT THAN ECONOMIC BUILDUP". NOTING THAT THERE ARE STILL SOME TAX OFFICIALS WHO ACCEPT BRIBES FROM PUBLIC, PAK SPECIFICALLY CALLED ON OFFICES OF MONOPOLY, SUPPLY, TAX ADMINISTRATION AND CUSTOMS TO REJECT CORRUPTION IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH PEOPLE.

2. AT MOFA INSPECTION JANUARY 23 PRESIDENT PAK IS QUOTED IN PRESS AS SAYING ROKG WILL MAINTAIN PRESENT UN DIPLOMACY, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS QTE REALISTICE, REASONABLE, AND APPROPRIATE UNQTE. HE SAID WITHOUT ELABORATION GOVERNMENT COULD NOT AGREE WITH QTE FANCIFUL UNQTE IDEAS ABOUT UN POLICY AND REUNIFICATION WHICH HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED. FOLLOWING MOFA BRIEFING PAK WAS QUOTED THAT WHILE IT WAS NECESSARY TO PRESS NORTH KOREA THROUGH DIPLOMACY, IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO OVERWHELM THE NORTH WITH SUPERIOR NATIONAL STRENGTH. PRESIDENT ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE COMING YEAR WILL SEE AN EXCHANGE OF INTERNATIONAL PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVES BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH KOREANS AS PYONGYANG PROPAGANDA ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE SOUTH INTENSIFY, AND HE CALLED FOR A STRONG ROKG EFFORT TO BLOCK THE COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA DRIVE.

3. ACCORDING TO MOFA OFFICIALS, FOREIGN MINISTER PAK TONG-CHIN'S BRIEFING FOR THE PRESIDENT GAVE FIRST PRIORITY TO SECURITY LINKS TO THE UNITED STATES, AND EMPHASIZED NATIONAL SECURITY, PROSPERITY AND UNIFICATION AS THE THREE MAJOR ROK FOREIGN POLICY GOALS. PAK'S REPORT ALSO SAID ROK UN POLICY WILL BE PURSUED WITH FLEXIBILITY AS A PART OF COUNTRY'S NATIONAL UNIFICATION POLICY. REPORT MENTIONED EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE THE CURRENTLY STALLED NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, CREATE A SYSTEM TO ENSURE NON-AGGRESSION, ACCELERATE MEASURES FOR CONVENING A FOUR-WAY KOREAN SECURITY CONFERENCE, AND WIN SUPPORT FROM KEY UN MEMBERS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED FOR CLOSER TIES WITH JAPAN AND OTHER FRIENDLY NATIONS AS A PART OF THE DRIVE TO STRENGTHEN ROK SECURITY. EXPORT PROMOTION, INTRODUCTION OF FOREIGN CAPITAL AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND SPORTS EXCHANGE WERE ALSO MENTIONED.

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4. DURING JANUARY 24 INSPECTION AT MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, PRESIDENT PARK MET WITH ROK ARMED FORCES SERVICE CHIEFS AND OTHER KEY MILITARY STAFF MEMBERS, AND WAS BRIEFED BY DEFENSE MINISTER SUH. PRESIDENT USED OCCASION TO REITERATE THEME THAT ANY NK INCURSION SOUTHWARDS WOULD BE CRUSHED IN ITS EARLY STAGES, AND TO BOOST THE REPUBLIC'S INCREASINGLY--SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE CAPABILITIES.

5. PRESIDENT SAID ROKG "HAD EXPECTED" TERMINATION OF GRANT
MILITARY AID FROM THE U.S., AND HAD CONSEQUENTLY
PREPARED ITSELF THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GROWING
DEFENSE SELF-RELIANCE. HE NOTED THAT U.S. MILITARY AID
RECEIVED BY KOREA OVER THE PAST QUARTER-CENTURY HAS
CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO ROK NATIONAL DEFENSE DEVELOPMENT,
AND EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THIS ASSISTANCE FROM "THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE."
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